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Title : Need to provide special economic package for alround development of the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (PONDICHERRY): Karaikal region of the Union Territory of Pondicherry is the most backward among the four regions of the territory. It is dependent mainly on agriculture as 80% of the population is deriving livelihood from it. But the development of agriculture is conditioned by the availability of Cauvery water which is erratic as the region is on the tail end of the Cauvery. The incidence of unemployment and poverty is high as other non-agricultural avenues have not been satisfactorily developed. The social indicators are also low. The standard of education, especially higher education is abysmally low. The health facilities available are of primary in nature and specialty treatment facilities are woefully inadequate and the patients are driven to far off regions. The infrastructure facilities in the form of roads, railways, ports, airstrip are inadequate. A comprehensive package for its development socially, economically and commercially is required. This district has not yet been covered under NREGP. Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India to initiate the following measures:

(1) To declare karaikal district as a backward district.

(2) Grant Aid under the Backward District Special Fund of the Planning Commission.

(3) Workout of a special package of development for Karaikal.

(4) Include Karaikal district under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme as the incidence of rural unemployment is very high.